AUSTIN SMILES SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER

SUMMARY OF THIS ISSUE'S CONTENT:

- El Salvador

- Our Junior League Volunteers

- Community Support

SETTING OUR VISION INTO ACTION Written by Teresa V. Cox - Executive Director, CEO



We had such a good start into our year and look forward to new growth as the spring is now upon us. Austin Smiles begun 2019 on a fantastic path by continuing to work towards establishing a foundation in El Salvador. We have developed exciting new partnerships both locally and internationally to advance our mission of providing sustainable surgical and post-surgical care to children born with cleft lip/palate. As we move closer to developing a comprehensive system of care for our patients, by deeply looking at their full spectrum of needs, we are excited and eager to continue growing our network of support aiming to keep creating smiles and improving lives.

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GROWTH IN EL SALVADOR

During our February mission trip to El Salvador, our team of volunteer Speech Language Pathologists conducted their first training to Salvadorian speech therapists from our partner organization, ISRI. The training focused on specific speech therapy techniques for patients born with cleft lip/palate. This conference was so successful that over 30 therapists from all over the country were in attendance. These 30 therapists have now returned to their centers to train their peers and will continue contact with our volunteers, to strengthen their knowledge through telehealth.

While in El Salvador, Austin Smiles Team toured our new office and storage units located inside Cristo Redentor's Community Clinic. We now have access to an office space, a room for medical evaluations, and a storage unit. Our new facilities share space with the community dental clinic and a wide range of medical specialists. We are grateful and fortunate for the support of our partners in El Salvador such as Club Rotario Cuscatlan, the Hospital Militar, ISRI, and Cristo Redentor's Community Clinic. These partners are committed to working together in advancing our mission of improving the health and smiles of Salvadorian children, and the quality of life for each of their families. -Austin Smiles Team

Julie Loney

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Our 2019 El Salvador Mission Was made possible by lots of supporters like you!

Special thanks to:

Cuddles for Clefts for providing the cutest stuffed animals for our patients

Hospital Militar and the Military for providing us safety and space to operate

Club Rotario Cuscatlan for running the behind the scenes show

and to our team of 32 amazing volunteers that came together to change lives!

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"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy" - Unknown

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VOICES OF OUR JUNIOR LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS

I was struck so often by the fathers I saw. Those dads were so effusive with their love. The kissing and cuddling, singing and hugging. Beyond any vagaries of birth or life, the love between parent and child is universal. I think I was so struck by this realization because of my preconceptions of these families. I thought they would be quieter, more solemn. Perhaps from nervousness, shyness, maybe even embarrassment. But instead I saw unquestioned love and a drive to do anything to give their children a better life.

One of my final interactions with a family before our trip ended is probably the one that I will remember best. In the recovery room, a mother was rocking her son to sleep as she told me how tired she herself was. They drove three hours on triage day to be evaluated, then three hours back home. They again drove three hours on surgery day and had been anxiously awaiting reunion with their son until I saw them around four that afternoon. But, she said, it was all worth it to help their boy. Through my Google Translate app, I told her in broken Spanish how in awe I was of her strength and devotion.

"Eres una mujer tan fuerte." She started to tear up, and I said, "No! If you cry, I'll cry!" And then, hugging each other and laughing, we cried together.

- Kelly Caravan, Junior League Volunteer

Amber Houmes JLA Volunteer "The Junior League of Austin is an organization of Women committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of Women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. Its purpose is exclusively educational and charitable." - JLA Mission Statement

We are so thankful for Junior League volunteers and their work during our mission trips. Their generosity makes our mission possible. We love having these kind-hearted Women join us in changing lives.

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"Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love." - Mother Teresa.

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VOICES OF OUR JUNIOR LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS

I was fortunate to join the El Salvador team as one of three nonmedical volunteers of the Austin Junior League (JLA). I had heard about the placement years ago, pinning it as my "reach" placement because so many members wanted to go. Since this was my last year as an active member after 14 years, I was ecstatic when I got it. I planned my family's calendar around it seven months prior to the trip.

To say my Austin Smiles experience was amazing is an understatement. I am still in awe I got to watch the operations themselves while the surgeons motioned me up to the operating table to see what they were doing. I witnessed happy, trusting children and parents, so grateful for the chance to start a new chapter after the surgery. I learned a new appreciation for the medical profession and this team in particular... their stamina to operate on and care for so many patients along with their caring hearts to volunteer hard-earned vacation time and expertise to help these children in a different country. Most importantly of all, I learned a new understanding of the issues behind cleft lip and palate and how much Austin Smiles' help is needed in these impoverished countries.

I may not be a surgeon, but I left the trip knowing my contribution was valuable. I have a pretty good guess this is why so many people have asked me about my trip – I helped change lives. - Susan Armstrong, Junior League Volunteer



"Each year, The Junior League of Austin gives hundreds of thousands of dollars in direct financial support and more than 160,000 volunteer hours to support over 30 local nonprofit organizations. It is through the collaboration and generous support of our volunteers, local non-profit organizations and donors that we are able to strengthen the Central the JLA website on Community Outreach

Special Thanks to:

- Alisa Cohen
- Amber Houmes
- Amy King
- Brandy Wuensch
- Kelly Canavan
- Pam Curtis
- Susan Armstrong

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JUNIOR LEAGUE



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"To get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with." - Mark Twain

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GENEROSITY

We are so excited to share that Austin Smiles was a recipient of the Altrua HealthShare award in the amount of \$45,000. This generous donation will help us cover the cost of our 2020 mission trip to El Salvador, and to help improve the health of children born with cleft lip/palate. We are honored and grateful for this new partnership!

Altrua

GET INVOLVED

We are looking forward to lots of growth and new partnerships in 2019. We ask that you consider getting involved with us this year, either through donations or volunteering.

Please email info@austinsmiles.org to request information on volunteer opportunities or to share your feedback.

We are working on expanding our reach and connections this year. Join us in changing the lives of children around the world!



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Make sure to like us on Facebook and Instagram and stay connected!



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DONATE NOW!

We know you have many choices when it comes to making charitable contributions. We hope that reading our newsletter will show you the power of donations here at Austin Smiles. Every dollar counts towards life change. Please consider mailing in your donation or clicking the donate button on our website www.austinsmiles.org to securely give.

Thank you!

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Austin Smiles. The Austin Plastic Surgery Foundation 9415 Burnet Road, Suite 207 - Austin, TX 78758 NonProfit Org U.S. Postage PAID Permit No. 1434 Austin, Tx

WHO WE ARE

Austin Smiles - The Austin Plastic Surgery Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mission is to provide sustainable surgical care to children born with cleft lip and cleft palate both in Central Texas and Latin America

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